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### AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Original). A method of maintaining a controlled level of oxygen within a closed food package, said method comprising:

forming at least one package element from a laminate of polymeric films, said laminate having selected oxygen permeability characteristics to maintain oxygen in said package at a level between the oxygen level which will prevent anaerobic microorganisms from developing and an oxygen level sufficient to permit aerobic bacteria to develop and thus indicate spoilage;

disposing a food product within said package; and  
closing the package to the outside atmosphere.

Claim 2 (Original). The method of claim 1 further comprising:

selecting said laminate polymeric films and providing the required surface area of the container to maintain a constant partial pressure of oxygen within said closed package at not less than about 1% O<sub>2</sub> and not more than about 2% O<sub>2</sub> and selecting said laminated polymer films designed to maintain desirable partial pressure of oxygen within said hermetically sealed container.

Claim 3 (Original). The method of claim 1 further wherein:

said closed package has a defined head space; and  
the volume of said head space is selected in combination with said permeability characteristics of said laminate to maintain at a stable selected level said partial pressure of oxygen within said package.

Claim 4 (Original). The method of claim 1 further comprising:

providing within said container micropores of selected diameter sufficient to permit passage of oxygen therethrough and into said container; and

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disposing a polymeric label material over said container micropores said polymeric label material having smaller label micropores therein to control diffusion of oxygen therethrough and to maintain partial oxygen pressure within said closed package at a selected level.

Claim 5 (Original). The method of claim 4 wherein said label material comprises expanded polypropylene.

Claim 6 (Original). The method of claim 4 wherein said label material comprises expanded polyethylenec.

Claim 7 (Original). The method of claim 1 further comprising:  
providing package surface area increasing means upon said food package elements for increasing the absolute value of oxygen permeability of the closed package.

Claim 8 (Original). The method of claim 7 wherein said package surface area increasing means comprises ribs disposed upon said package.

Claim 9 (Original). The method of claim 7 further comprising adjusting the size of said package surface area increasing means to control the effective amount of surface area of said package available for oxygen transmission.

Claim 10 (Currently amended). The method of claim 7 further comprising ~~lid~~ providing a food package having container and package lid elements; and providing said package surface area means upon said container element of said food package.

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Claim 11 (Currently amended). The method of claim 7 further comprising:  
providing a food package having container and package lid elements; and  
providing said package surface area means upon said package lid element of  
said food package.

Claim 12 (Withdrawn).

Claim 13 (Withdrawn).

Claim 14 (Original). The method of claim 7 further comprising:  
selecting said laminate polymeric films to maintain a constant partial pressure  
of oxygen within said closed package at not less than about 1% O<sub>2</sub> and not more than about  
2% O<sub>2</sub>.

Claim 15 (Original). The method of claim 7 further wherein:  
said closed package has a defined head space; and  
the volume of said head space is selected in combination with said  
permeability characteristics of said laminate to maintain at a stable selected level said partial  
pressure of oxygen within said package.

Claim 16 (Original). The method of claim 7 further comprising:  
providing within said container micropores of selected diameter sufficient to  
permit passage of oxygen therethrough and into said container; and  
disposing a polymeric label material over said container micropores said  
polymeric label material having smaller label micropores therein to control diffusion of  
oxygen therethrough and to maintain partial oxygen pressure within said closed package at a  
selected level.

Claim 17 (Original). The method of claim 7 wherein said label material  
comprises expanded polypropylene.

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Claim 18 (Original). The method of claim 7 wherein said label material comprises expanded polyethylene.

Claim 19 (Original). The method of claim 4 wherein said container micropores are approximately 25 microns in diameter.

Claim 20 (Original). The method of claim 4 wherein said smaller label micropores are approximately 5 microns in diameter.

Claim 21 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein at least one package element is formed from styrene-butadiene copolymer.

Claim 22 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein at least one package element has a gaseous diffusion rate of  $400-600 \text{ cc O}_2 / 24 \text{ hours} / 100 \text{ in}^2 / \text{mil}$  at ATM.

Claim 23 (Original). The method of claim 8 wherein said ribs stiffen said package element.

Claim 24 (Original). The method of claim 23 further comprising decreasing the thickness of said package element to control the gaseous permeability characteristics thereof.

Claim 25 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein said closed food package comprises container and package lid elements with package closure means disposed therebetween.

Claim 26 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said package closure element comprises a sealable strip.

Claim 27 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said package closure further comprises a flange supporting said sealable strip.

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Claim 28 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said package closure means comprises mating male and female members.

Claim 29 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said package lid element comprises a dome.

Claim 30 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said package lid element comprises a dome hermetically sealed with the cup.

Claim 31 (Original). The method of claim 25 wherein said container element includes an opening thereinto and a closure membrane is sealed thereupon.

Claim 32 (Cancelled).

Claim 33 (Original). The method of claim 31 further comprising controlling the gaseous diffusion rate of said closure membrane.

Claim 34 (Original). The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of said package elements has a gaseous diffusion rate of approximately  $0.1 \text{ cc O}_2 / 24 \text{ hours} / 100 \text{ in}^2 / \text{ATM @ } 75^\circ\text{F}$  and relative humidity at 65%.

Claim 35 (New). The method of claim 30 wherein the cup and dome define an interior space containing a gaseous mixture selected from the group consisting of: a mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen; a mixture of nitrogen and oxygen; and a mixture of argon, carbon dioxide and nitrogen.